# Comparative Analysis of Work-Life Balance in Traditional Employment vs. Gig Economy under Remote Work Conditions in Latur City

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**ABSTRACT**

This study compares how traditional employees and gig economy workers in Latur city manage their work-life balance while working remotely. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the rise of remote work, making it even more important to understand the impact of different employment models on work-life balance. This study focuses on the particular constraints and opportunities faced by workers in small urban settings, when sector-specific socio-economic considerations are important. Data were gathered from a sample of 100 regular and gig workers in Latur City using a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews. Key aspects of work-life balance are examined in the study, such as stress levels, time management, job flexibility, and the blurring of work and personal life borders. The results show that gig workers and traditional employees have rather different experiences with work-life balance. Gig workers report more freedom but also more difficulty drawing a clear line between work and personal life.

The study emphasizes the value of tailored approaches to help remote employees strike a healthy work-life balance, especially in areas like Latur City where socioeconomic circumstances and infrastructure are different from those in more metropolitan areas. Employers, legislators, and workers themselves can improve work-life balance for remote workers in both traditional and gig employment contexts by implementing the useful suggestions that are given. This study adds to our understanding of how work-life balance in a particular regional context is shaped by the interaction between employment type and remote work.

**Keywords:** Traditional Workers, Gig Workers, Work Life Balance, Coping Mechanism

**INTRODUCTION**

With the shift to remote work catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic, employment dynamics around the world have changed significantly. While remote work offers increased flexibility and convenience, it also presents new challenges, especially for maintaining a healthy work-life balance. These challenges manifest differently depending on the type of employment, with traditional employees and gig workers experiencing remote work differently. In traditional employment, workers often follow structured schedules and set responsibilities, leading to a more predictable but rigid work environment. Remote work has disrupted these norms, blurring the lines between professional and personal life. Home has now become the office for many, making it difficult for traditional employees to disconnect from work, resulting in potential stress and reduced job flexibility. On the other hand, gig workers, who typically work in more flexible and autonomous employment structures, have long enjoyed the freedom to set their own

working hours. However, this increased autonomy comes with unique challenges in the context of remote work. The lack of a fixed schedule often blurs the boundaries between work and personal life, resulting in irregular work patterns and in some cases increased stress and difficulty maintaining work-life separation. This study focuses on the city of Latur, a small urban setting, to explore how traditional employees and gig workers navigate their work-life balance in remote work conditions. The specific socio-economic and infrastructural context of Latur adds another layer of complexity, making it necessary to examine how remote work affects employees in this non-metropolitan region. By comparing the experiences of these two groups, this study aims to provide insight into the challenges and opportunities posed by remote work, offering recommendations to help workers better manage their work-life balance in such settings.

## Work-Life Balance of Traditional Employees

Traditional employees, typically those working in more formal, structured roles, reported moderate levels of stress during remote work conditions. They generally managed their time effectively, owing to the predictable nature of their job responsibilities. Many traditional employees adhered to a fixed work schedule, which provided a sense of routine and structure, helping them plan their daily activities and manage their work tasks efficiently. However, while time management seemed to be under control, these employees encountered significant challenges when it came to job flexibility. Traditional employment often comes with set expectations and strict timelines, limiting the employee's ability to adjust their working hours based on personal needs. This lack of flexibility became a pronounced issue during remote work, as many employees had to juggle professional duties with household responsibilities, especially in the absence of clear boundaries between work and personal life. The sudden shift to working from home blurred these boundaries, making It harder for traditional employees to separate their professional obligations from their personal lives. With the office and home environment converging, many reported difficulty in "switching off" after work hours, leading to a persistent mental engagement with their job even during personal time. This blending of work and life created additional stress, impacting their overall work-life balance.

## Work-Life Balance of Gig Workers

Gig workers, often freelancers or contract-based workers, experienced a different dynamic when working remotely. They generally reported enjoying greater autonomy and flexibility in managing their time. Unlike traditional employees, gig workers are usually not bound by fixed work hours, allowing them to choose when and where to work. This freedom can be a significant advantage, as it allows gig workers to accommodate personal needs and preferences more easily than their traditionally employed counterparts. However, with this increased flexibility came substantial challenges in maintaining a clear distinction between work and personal life. The ability to work at any time often led to irregular work patterns, with gig workers struggling to establish a consistent routine. Many gig workers found themselves working late into the night or during weekends, as the lack of a defined schedule made it difficult to impose boundaries on their work time. This constant availability and fluidity of work hours, while offering freedom, also heightened stress levels for some gig workers. The absence of clear start and end times blurred the lines between professional and personal life, making it harder to fully disengage from work. As a result, many gig workers faced difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, with their personal lives frequently overlapping with their professional obligations. .

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Even though remote work is becoming more and more popular, little is known about how it impacts work-

life balance, especially in smaller cities like Latur City. This study compares the experiences of gig workers and regular (Traditional) employees in an effort to close this gap.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate the effects of remote work on traditional employees' work-life balance in Latur City.
2. To examine the issues with work-life balance that gig workers encounter in the same setting.
3. To determine and contrast the coping mechanisms employed by the two groups

## METHODOLOGY

**Research Design**: This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth interviews. The sample comprises 50 traditional employees and 50 gig workers from Latur City.

**Data Collection:** Data was collected through structured surveys addressing stress levels, time management, job flexibility, and work-life boundary issues. In-depth interviews provided qualitative insights into personal experiences and coping mechanisms.

1. **Stress and Blurred Boundaries**: How does remote work contribute to higher stress levels due to blurred work-life boundaries in smaller urban settings like Latur?
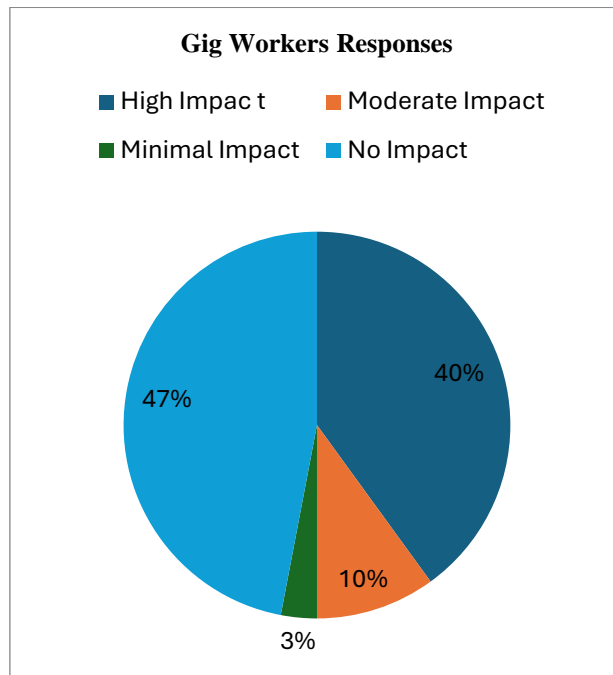
**Figure 1.1**
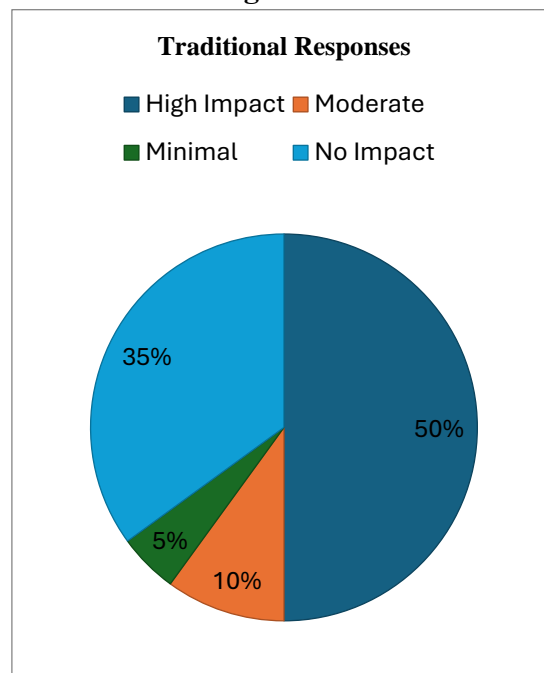
**Figure 1.2**

**Finding:** 65% of traditional employees and 53% of gig workers reported elevated stress levels due to blurred boundaries between work and personal life.

**Interpretation:** Remote work in smaller urban settings like Latur blurs work-life boundaries, contributing to higher stress and difficulty in disengaging from work.

**2. Time Management and Flexibility:** How does the structured nature of traditional employment affect job flexibility and overall satisfaction compared to the autonomy and irregular work patterns experienced by gig workers?
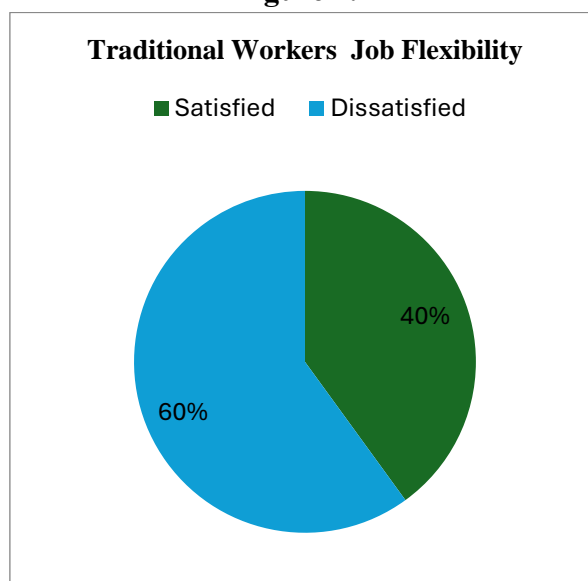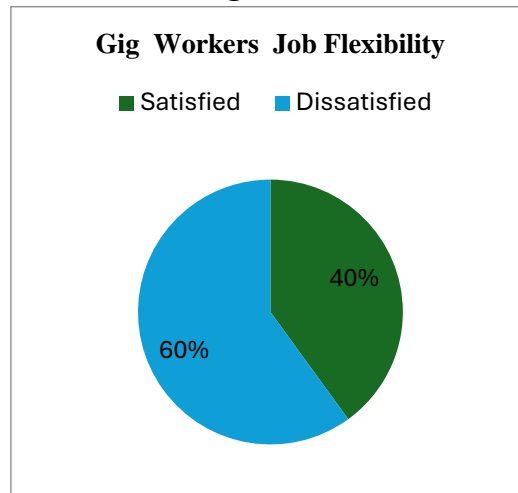
**Figure 2.1**

**Figure 2.2**

### Gig Workers Job Flexibility

■ Satisfied   ■ Dissatisfied



**Figure 2.3**

### Time Management Traditional Workers

■ Effective   ■ Ineffective



**Figure 2.4**
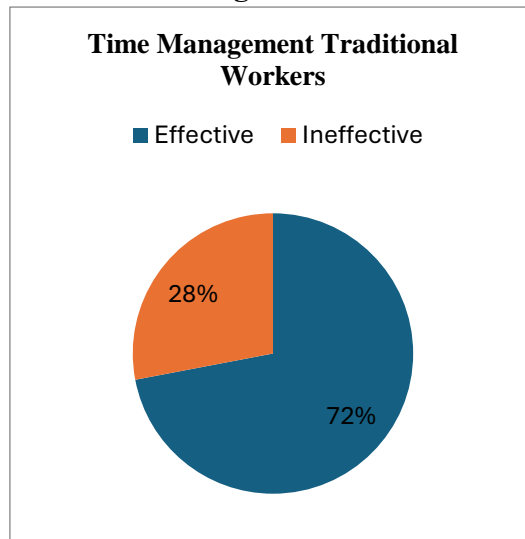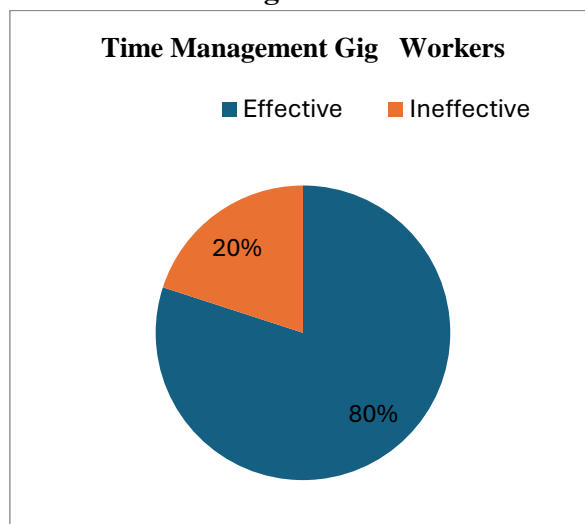
### Time Management Gig Workers

■ Effective   ■ Ineffective

**Finding:** 72% of traditional employees reported effective time management but 60% were dissatisfied with their job flexibility. Conversely, 80% of gig workers valued their autonomy, but 60% struggled with irregular work patterns.

**Interpretation:** While traditional employees benefit from structured roles, they lack flexibility, leading to stress. Gig workers enjoy autonomy but face challenges in maintaining consistent routines, contributing to erratic schedules and stress.

**3. Coping Mechanisms:** How effective are structured routines and designated workspaces for traditional employees in separating work and personal life, compared to gig workers' attempts to set non-working hours?

**Figure 3**
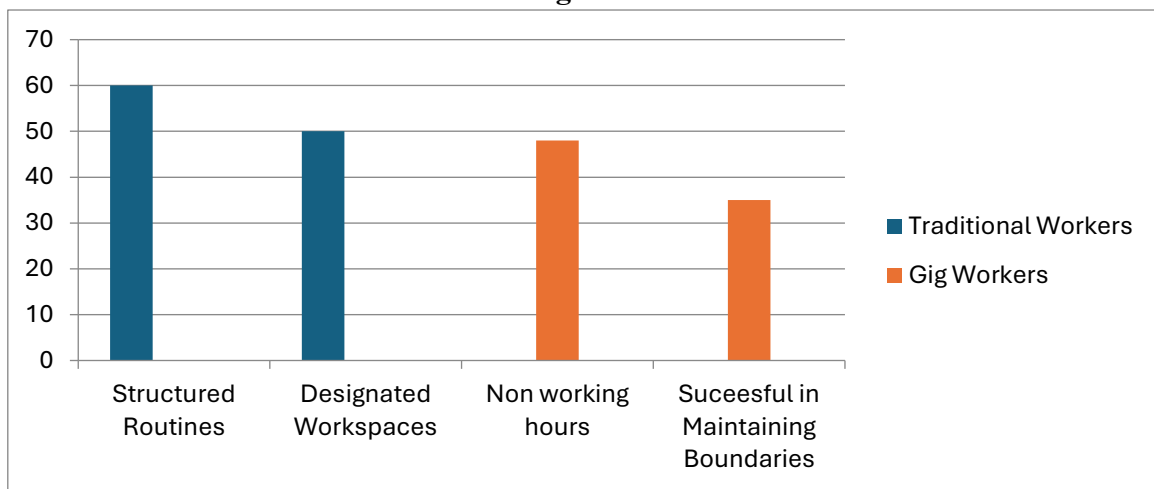


**Finding:** Traditional employees utilized structured routines (60%) and designated workspaces (50%) to separate work and personal life. Gig workers attempted to set non-working hours (48%), but only 35% were successful in maintaining boundaries.

**Interpretation:** Traditional employees rely on routine to mitigate the rigidity of their roles, whereas gig workers face challenges in maintaining self-imposed work-life boundaries due to the flexible nature of their work.

**4. Regional Impact**: How do infrastructural limitations and cultural expectations in Latur affect remote workers' ability to maintain a work-life balance?

**Figure 4**
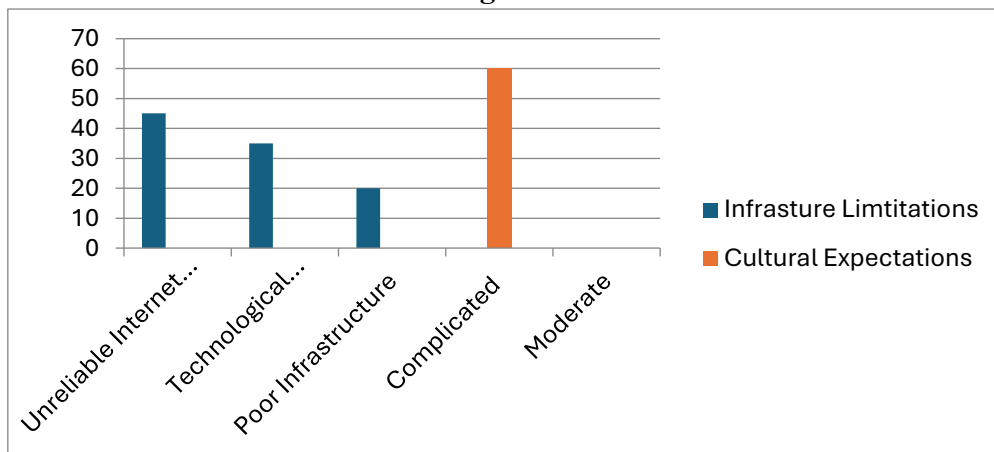
**Finding:** 45% of respondents cited unreliable internet as a barrier to effective remote work, and 60% reported that cultural expectations complicated their work-life balance.

**Interpretation:** Latur's infrastructural limitations and socio-cultural pressures add to the challenges faced by remote workers, making work-life balance more difficult to achieve in smaller cities.

**5. Socio-Cultural Norms:** How do familial obligations and cultural norms in Latur influence work-life boundaries for traditional employees versus gig workers?

**Figure 5**
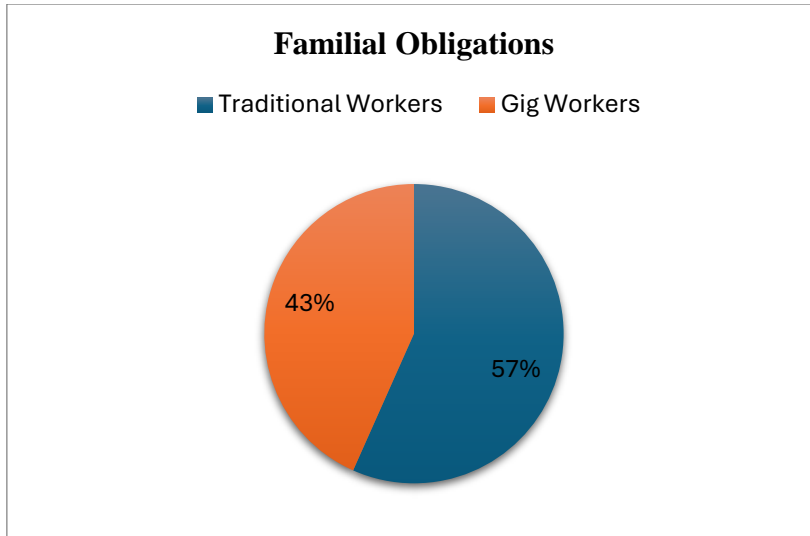


**Finding:** 68% of traditional employees and 52% of gig workers reported that familial obligations interfered with work, further blurring work-life boundaries.

## sFINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### 1. Traditional Employees:

- Stress Levels: 65% of traditional employees reported moderate stress levels associated with remote work. The primary cause was the inability to separate work from personal life, with 58% stating that they often felt mentally engaged with work even after hours.
- Time Management: 72% of traditional employees found their structured job roles allowed them to manage their time effectively. However, 45% indicated that while they could adhere to a set schedule, it was difficult to manage household responsibilities simultaneously.
- Job Flexibility: 60% of traditional employees reported dissatisfaction with the lack of job flexibility in remote work. The rigid work schedules hindered their ability to adjust for personal needs, especially during the pandemic when family obligations were heightened.
- Blurring Boundaries: 68% of respondents reported that the shift to remote work blurred the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to issues such as working outside official hours and experiencing reduced downtime.

### 2. Gig Workers:

- Freedom and Autonomy:80% of gig workers enjoyed the autonomy of choosing their work hours. However, 55% of them admitted that this freedom sometimes led to challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance due to irregular work hours.

- Work Patterns: 60% of gig workers struggled with establishing consistent work routines. About 48% indicated they often worked late into the night or during weekends, contributing to difficulty in disengaging from work.
- Stress Levels: Despite the perceived freedom, 53% of gig workers reported high levels of stress, largely due to the unpredictable nature of their work hours and the lack of clear boundaries between work and personal life.

**3. Common Challenges:**

- Blurring Boundaries: Both groups faced challenges in maintaining clear work-life boundaries. Among the traditional employees, 68% reported blurred boundaries, while 55% of gig workers experienced the same issue, although for different reasons.
- Stress Management: 65% of traditional employees and 53% of gig workers indicated that remote work increased their stress levels due to the overlap between home and work environments. Many cited the challenge of balancing personal responsibilities with work expectations.

**4. Coping Mechanisms:**

- Traditional Employees:60% of traditional employees implemented structured daily routines, and 50% created designated workspaces within their homes to better separate work from personal life.
- Gig Workers: 48% of gig workers attempted to set "non-working" hours to create better boundaries. However, only 35% reported success in maintaining consistent boundaries, indicating a struggle to stick to their self-imposed schedules.

**5. Regional Context and Socio-Economic Factors:**

- Impact of Socio-Economic Conditions:70% of respondents (both traditional employees and gig workers) noted that the socio-economic and infrastructural limitations in Latur City, such as unreliable internet (reported by 45% of participants) and lack of dedicated workspaces at home (reported by 40%), contributed to their struggles in maintaining a work-life balance.
- Cultural Expectations: 60% of participants indicated that cultural and familial expectations in Latur City required them to take on additional responsibilities at home, further complicating their efforts to maintain clear work-life boundaries. This was more prevalent among traditional employees (68%) than gig workers (52%).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **For Traditional Employees:** Employers should offer more flexible work arrangements, allowing employees to adjust their work hours to accommodate personal responsibilities while maintaining productivity. – Priority should be given to implementing clear boundaries between working hours and personal time, including policies that discourage working beyond scheduled hours.
2. **For gig workers:** Gig workers should be encouraged to establish a more consistent work routine, possibly by setting designated work hours to create a clear separation between work and personal life.- Digital tools for time management and boundary-setting can be beneficial in helping gig workers manage their work schedules more effectively.
3. **For Employers and Policymakers:** Employers and policymakers should proactively intervene to address the specific socio-economic challenges faced by remote workers in small urban settings like Latur. This includes improving digital infrastructure, such as reliable internet access, and recognizing the additional family and community responsibilities that workers face.

4. **For Regional Considerations:** Special attention should be paid to regional dynamics in smaller cities with different infrastructure and socio-economic factors than larger urban areas. Programs that offer community-based support, flexible work options, and technology upgrades can reduce the impact of regional disparities on work-life balance.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides a comparative analysis of work-life balance between traditional employees and gig workers in Latur city, under remote working conditions, a situation increasingly prevalent in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings provide critical insights into how different employment models traditional and gig workers shape work-life balance experiences, especially in the context of the unique socio-economic and infrastructural conditions of a small urban area like Latur. Challenges are faced. Traditional employees benefit from a structured work environment, which facilitates effective time management. However, they suffer from a lack of flexibility, which makes it difficult to balance personal responsibilities, especially in remote settings as the lines between work and personal life blur. This rigidity, along with the challenges of working from home, increases stress and makes it difficult to stay away from work. Gig workers, on the other hand, enjoy greater autonomy and flexibility in determining their work schedule, which is valued as a key benefit of their employment model. However, this flexibility also presents significant challenges, particularly maintaining a consistent work routine and establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life. The lack of a structured work environment leads to irregular work patterns, longer working hours and increased stress. Both groups faced common problems related to work ambiguity and personal life boundaries, although the causes of these problems differed based on their employment models. Traditional employees found their work hours invading personal time due to rigid schedules and the shift to home-based work. Gig workers, with the freedom to choose their work hours, struggled to establish consistent boundaries, creating difficulties in separating work-life. The territorial context of Latur city further complicated these challenges. Limited access to reliable Internet, limited infrastructure, and strong socio cultural expectations regarding family and community responsibilities created additional pressures for both traditional employees and gig workers. These factors increase the difficulty of maintaining a clear division between work and personal life and underscore the need for a region-specific approach to assisting remote workers.

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